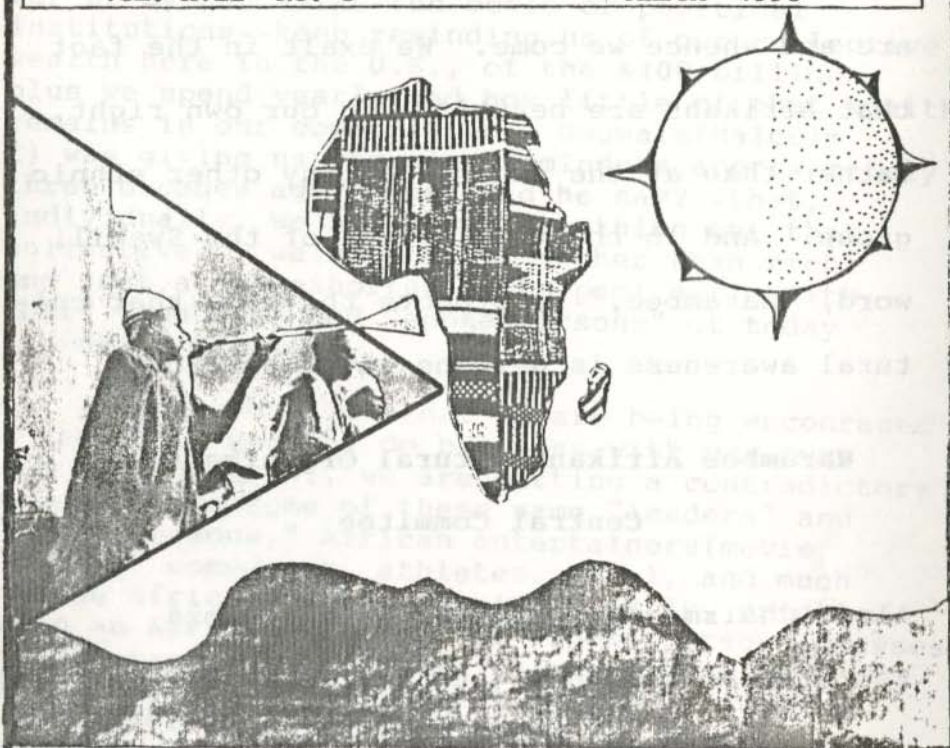


HARAMBEE FLAME

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Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization Creed

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization

Central Commitee

Alaga(Chairman) - Shaheed Khaleel Hamza

Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chrmn. of Cultural Affairs Committee) - JaRon Dean

Olotu Eko(Education Chrmn.) - Mondo

Akapo(Treasurer) - Kenny Walker

Eleto(Admin. Chrmn.) - Iem Hotep

Akowe(Secretary) - Tyrone Hayes

Akewi(Librarian) - Ur ser Ra

Commentary

"Our" political, religious, business, and other "leaders" and "spokespersons"--"Our," "leaders," and "spokespersons" are in quotes because some of these Africans only posture like they're representing our interests and some are appointed for us by Caucasian-run media or political institutions--keep reminding us of our collective wealth here in the U.S., of the \$400 billion-plus we spend yearly and how little of that wealth remains in our communities. Omowale(Malcolm X) was giving us the same reminders approximately three decades ago. What did he say?--that, individually, we had hardly anything but that, collectively, we were rich, richer than rich. And just as he exhorted us to pool our wealth, "our" "leaders" and "spokespersons" of today are doing likewise.

But at the same time that we are being encouraged to pool our wealth, do business with our own, and be economical, we are getting a contradictory message from some of these same "leaders" and "spokespersons," African entertainers(movie "stars," comedians, athletes, etc.), and much of the African-owned media(especially, print). When an African "leader" or "spokesperson" dresses in thousand-dollar suits, is chauffeured in a stretch-limousine, and/or lives in a mansion, what model does that establish for being economical?



On the mountaintop again, Barry White poses (top) in the driveway of his 15-room Las Vegas mansion, complete with six bathrooms, a game room and a piano room (above) lined with nearly 30 years of music awards. He says he did a lot of thinking during his time away.

As we find ourselves in a time when young African males are killing each other in a monstrous frenzy, are being sent to jails and prisons at a horrendously high rate, destroying themselves and their Sisters and Brothers with crack and other toxic drugs, African females are having babies while they are still essentially children themselves, and when a host of other tragedies are running crazy in our communities, "our" "leaders" and "spokespersons" are telling us that we're having self-esteem problems and that we must do things to promote self- and mutual-respect. They're right, at least in part, in their diagnosis and correct in the prescription. But, again, we're getting contradictory messages.

What kind of self-esteem can an African male who's married to a Caucasian be talking about? Whatever his motivation for choosing, or being chosen by, this mate, the **message** he sends is one that reinforces the media-hyped notion that it is the Caucasian female who is **the** standard for beauty and, by implication, that an African female is an insufficient symbol (or no symbol at all) of an African male's financial or other "success." When an African actor accepts film roles that serve to trivialize, objectify, or otherwise do injustice to African people or/and to the validity of our concerns, what kind of contribution is he or she making to the improvement of our levels of self-esteem?

Much is being said about the dissing, by "gangsta" rappers, of African girls and women. And there is no question but that the reference to our girls and women as "bitches," "hos," etc. contributes both to a lowering of both what African females think of themselves and what African males think of them. But while this disparaging of our Sisters is being done by those

whom the so-called "mainstream" can put down as "illegitimate" or "irresponsible," the allegedly "responsible" and "legitimate" African press often disses Sisters as well. Is it not an attack on African female self-image that almost all



All New Dark & Lovely

Straightens better, gentler than ever.

You've never had it like this.

A completely improved Dark & Lovely no-lye relaxer that straightens better and is gentler than ever. Now, your hair shines, moves and styles like only Dark & Lovely hair can.



Dark & Lovely
All New. All About You.

Warning: Follow directions carefully to avoid skin and scalp irritation, hair breakage and eye injury.

The above ad is a fairly typical example of hair-"care" promotions to be found in the "black" "mainstream" press, as well as on television, sponsoring "Soul Train" and numerous other "black" shows. So what's the message? The Sister can be dark--or her hair can be dark--but she can be made lovely by just getting rid of those "ugly" naps.

African women featured in ads or articles on beauty in magazines such as EBONY, JET, and others are light-skinned, typically have very Caucasian features, and have straight or straightened hair? How is such a barrage of Eurocentric messages about beauty and femininity supposed to uplift the self-

esteem of African girls and women who "suffer" from the "deformities" of dark skin, wooly hair, flat noses, etc.? LaToya and Michael Jackson are but extreme examples of the lengths to which some of us will go to rid ourselves of physical reminders of our African heritage. Mutants that they are, their looks underline a visible dimension of an African rejection of self.

"Our" "leaders" and "spokespersons," responding to the seeming disconnection of many African youth from a sense of responsibility, from a positive code of behavior, and from other social/cultural values that



Above, we see Diana Ross, as she appeared on David Letterman some months ago. Next to her is Caucasian rocker, Cyndi Lauper. For many of us, wanting Caucasians' looks is not enough. We must ape their behavior as well.

promote harmony in a community, tell us that we need
(Cont. on page 14)

Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. "Community News" is another vehicle.

We encourage you to submit your reports, essays, poems, etc. Please enclose stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

From Other Sources

Africentric Program For Youth In Columbus Ohio

"The program is called Simba, a Swahili term meaning 'young lions'. The program is an Africentric mentoring and 'Rites of Passage' which matches African American male youths ages 5-18, under the care of Franklin County Children Services with responsible African American men from the community for friendship, support and guidance...

"The program began in 1988 by Clifford Tyree, Kwesi Kambon and Karen Boyd Bell. These African Americans got together and challenged children services to begin an Africentric program that would meet the needs of African American males.

"Director of Simba, Greg Arnold said the program began with four male members on June 15, 1988, but is now hovering close to 100 men...

"Halliburton[Harvey Halliburton, Director of Habilitation and Employment for Juvenile Court] said, "We need more adults to step to the forefront and take on the responsibility and get more involved in the community. If we were more involved with those kids, they'd feel safer..."

"African centered philosophy stresses that it is our duty and responsibility...mentors demonstrate their commitment by guiding, teaching and modeling responsible African American manhood...

"'60% of black youths are afraid and feel that no one cares about them. But if you don't live in the inner city, you don't share these feelings', Halliburton said...

"The Simba program sponsors monthly Rites of Passage, Manhood Training Groups for mentors and mentees. These group sessions are held at the Martin Luther King branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, 'Because we want to consistently expose our youth to the wealth of knowledge in books and to support one of our community based library branches', Arnold said..."

-from "Mentoring Can Make All The Difference," page B
3, Feb. 1 COLUMBUS CALL & POST(Columbus, OH.)

Sisters Helping Sisters

"JASA House(Just A Sister Away) is a non profit organization founded by Alisha Campbell-Matthews and Cynthia Jackson to promote long term solutions for women and children in crisis...

"JASA House is one of the few organizations that offers a minimum six month stay with the option of staying as long as two years...

"Though the program itself is less than two years old, it has acted as a pivotal stepping stone for women and children who have in certain cases come to them after being released from emergency shelters but were still facing eminent danger from spouses and mates.

"Several of these women have gone on to obtain GEDs and employment, and they have become deeply involved in community organizations and activities...

"The concept of JASA House is based on a shared living environment as a means to self-sufficiency. Their residential homes are located in quality neighborhoods throughout the city, where residents gain respect and pride for themselves and the community.

"A major part of the JASA House philosophy is that dependency is best overcome through the acceptance of responsibility. Residents here share in a variety of ways: dwelling space, fellowship, home-life, household expenses and responsibility in support services..."

-from "'Just A Sister Away' Helps Women In Crisis," page
32, Jan. 31 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Campaign To Get Books And Other School Supplies to Motherland

"The Rev. Leon H. Sullivan's appeal for educational supplies to help desperately needy children in African countries has generated widespread response throughout the United States.

"Rev. Sullivan, convener of the African-American Summit[held last May in Dakar, Senegal] and the founder of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America(OIC), launched his SOS(Supporters of SubSaharan Africa) Campaign to help millions of African school children at a public rally in Philadelphia during Thanksgiving week.

"Rev. Sullivan said thousands of boxes of books and school supplies have poured into Philadelphia from across America...

"'As the Polish help Poland, as the Irish help Ireland, as the Jewish help Israel, it is time that African Americans help brothers and sisters on the continent of Africa. We must help Africa's children with their educational needs...'

"More than 4,000 persons attended the kick-off rally in Philadelphia, including 2,000 children from public schools, representatives of churches and community organizations.

"Also in attendance were ambassadors from 15 African countries, representatives of the U.S. government..."

-from "Rev. Leon Sullivan Appeals for Educational Materials To Help School Children In Africa," pages 21 and 25, Jan. 5 MUSLIM JOURNAL(Chicago, IL.)

African Inroads In Print And On Screen In U.S.

"In the 11 years since Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple' became the first contemporary Black best-seller made into a motion picture, interest in Black publishing and filmmaking have been converging.

"The entertainment world took serious note of the value of African-American audiences with the ratings success of television's 'The Cosby Show.' Then Spike Lee's 1986 movie,

"She's Gotta Have It," and subsequent films inspired a new generation of young Black filmmakers--and financial backers--and proved the viability of an African-American ticket-buying audience...

"Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Films has carved out a significant share of Black films with large and small screen projects, including Toni Morrison's 'BeLoved'; Harlem Renaissance author Dorothy West's recent best-seller, 'The Wedding'; and, in conjunction with Quincy Jones' production company, Zora Neale Hurston's 'Their Eyes Were Watching God'. Some of Winfrey's projects may go to television as part of her agreement to do six films in three years for ABC. They'll be presented in the vein of Masterpiece Theater...Her feature films are likely to be produced as part of her recent exclusive five-year agreement to produce films for a division of Disney.

"Denzel Washington has fortified his screen bankability with business savvy and behind-the-scenes control. His Mundy Lane Productions hopes to work out a deal with Columbia TriStar Pictures to produce more of author Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins detective tales...

"John Singleton purchased the rights to Nathan McCall's 'Makes Me Wanna Holler' after reading the book...

"He agrees that the flood of books by Blacks provides a viable pool to consider: 'The great thing about it is that the films that are being made now in terms of Black literature are being made by Black people'...

'Waiting To Exhale'...turned heads when it hit The New York Times best-seller list the week it came out in 1992. Viking printed 700,000 hardback copies. The \$2.64 million sale of the paperback rights to Pocket Books made headlines and launched McMillan into a whole new realm of literary superstardom. That translated into serious clout for McMillan in the Production of 'Exhale'. As co-executive producer, she had a hand in casting a script decisions and the selection of director Forest Whitaker...

"While much of the new commercial fiction is written by women,

the field is opening up for brothers. Blanche Richardson, manager of Marcus Bookstore in Oakland, Calif., tells Publisher's Weekly that the screen versions of 'Devil In a Blue Dress' and even 'Makes Me Wanna Holler', an autobiography by Washington Post reporter McCall, will 'encourage a lot of people to get into novel writing. We'll see more [men] next year and even more the year after that. And the cream's going to rise to the top'...

-from "From Page To Screen," pages 38-42, March EMERGE (Washington, D.C.)

U.S. Corporate Hand In Saro-Wiwa Execution?

..."Ken Saro-Wiwa founded MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People) in 1990 to unite the Ogoni in a campaign for basic human rights, political autonomy, economic compensation for damages, a clean-up of the spills, and an end to toxic wastes and the poisoning of the air through decades of gas flaring...

"The Nigerian...military...sent troops into Ogoni-land to crush opposition to the practices of Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, and other oil companies. Shell Oil, whose oil and natural gas production generates 50 percent of Nigeria's annual revenue, minced no words in 'encouraging' the Nigerian regime to crack down on Saro-Wiwa: 'Shell operations (are) still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence'. (Internal Nigerian military memo, May 1994.) The document stated that 400 soldiers should begin 'wasting operations' and 'wasting' Ogoni leaders who are 'especially vocal individuals'. Twelve days later, Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested, charges against him fabricated. Two key prosecution witnesses later stated that they were bribed by Shell to give phony evidence against Saro-Wiwa. (Michael Birnbaum, UK Criminal Bar Association Human Rights report.)

(cont. on page 12)

Kuumba (Creativity)

-Ella Robinson
(Montgomery, Ala.)

Death Is A Grammar

Now more than any time
Our birthday is an autumn,
One of wizened fruit.
Babies die in the womb,
Refuse to swim up stream.
Surrogate are the mothers.
More fortunate come to life,
And as youth grab guns and blast
At an image mirrored.

Spreading is death,
Its blanket, soft and white,
Sniff powder, or tiny pellets,
Serve as warmth.

Red-winged blackbirds catch delight
in flames.

The horse is white and empty
Of power, of art, of song.
Relief with it beguiles.
Like a dentist's drill,
The haunted is a tune
On a high numb, hated.
The stars glitter;
Black and white are miles apart,
Dying.

Made of terra-cotta are dolls.
Mankind drowns itself in blood.
Walls fall as talisman for freedom.
Hemlock is as hot as tea.

Slashed is the throat of love,
in sewer pipes of laughter.
Letters explode, pot-bellied
Green grenades roll.
Murder floats within a glove.
The moon is brilliant, red.

Insanity devotes greed to war.
A last moment is just that.

"A few days after the executions, Shell announced plans to go ahead with a liquefied natural gas plant and pipeline project in the Niger Delta (through Ogoniland), funded largely by the World Bank, to the tune of \$180 million..."

-from "Murder In Nigeria," pages 38-41, Feb. Z
MAGAZINE (Woods Hole, MA.)

Nigerian Diplomacy; Part of Nation of Islam Leader's World Friendship Tour

"Announcing a breakthrough that has been accomplished by few outside Nigeria, Min. Farrakhan announced that he and several delegates met with Chief Mashood Abiola, the man widely believed to have won the annulled 1993 elections. Mr. Abiola has been held under detention since then and is awaiting a trial on charges of treason because he refused to accept the annulment and attempted to put into place his own government..."

"Min. Farrakhan also announced he and delegates had visited Ogoniland, but the trip was too brief to draw conclusions. During the four-hour stop, delegates visited the site where the four chiefs were murdered and talked with several witnesses. Min. Farrakhan pledged, however, to send a team of journalists back in several weeks to talk with all parties involved, including Mr. Saro-Wiwa's lawyers, witnesses and members of Mr. Saro-Wiwa's group Mos-sap..."

-from "Solving The Crisis In Nigeria," pages 3,
6, 7, 9, March 6 THE FINAL CALL

Community News

On the 27th. of February, we held our annual African History Program here at the State Prison here in Lincoln. Though several sisters and brothers from the outside had confirmed that they would be here, a total of **four** actually showed up, which would seem to indicate that there are a bunch of our people who have little or no understanding of the importance of either the work we are trying to do or the impact that participation from the outside can have on our effectiveness. Regardless of the pathetic turn-out from the outside, the program wound up being among the more potent that we've had.

After the call to order, Rev. Ekoka Molindo, a brother from western Africa, conducted the pouring of libation, addressing the spirits of our ancestors both in the tongue of his ethnic group and in English. Hotep, our Eleto(Administrative Chairman), functioning as m.c., introduced Hamza, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org. Alaga(Chairman), who delivered a few words of welcome to our members and guests.

Several presentations were given. James Conyers, the incoming chairman of the University of Nebraska at Omaha Black Studies Program, spoke on the importance of knowing the history of one's people. Our Alaga(Chairman) did a rap poetry anthology, which included Claude McC ay's "If We Must Die." Urser Ra did book reports on CRISIS IN BLACK AND WHITE by Charles Silverman and CONFRONTATION: BLACK AND WHITE by Lerone Bennett. Neb(Brother Nash addressed us on a number of aspects of our organization creed. Dexter Brown and Mondo spoke on Malcolm X and on criteria for choosing our his torical heroes, respectively. Ekoka Molindo, a native of West Africa, dealt with the question of cultural identity. Idu Maduli involved several of the brothers in a skit based on African folklore, which illustrated the validity of the African communalist principle. And Hotep delivered remarks on the issue of reparations. Two other of our mem- bers were unable to give their presentations due, both to the lateness with which we got started and unforeseen changes in a couple of the program seg- ments. Our apologies to these brothers and thanks to them and to everybody else who helped make the program interesting and enlightening.

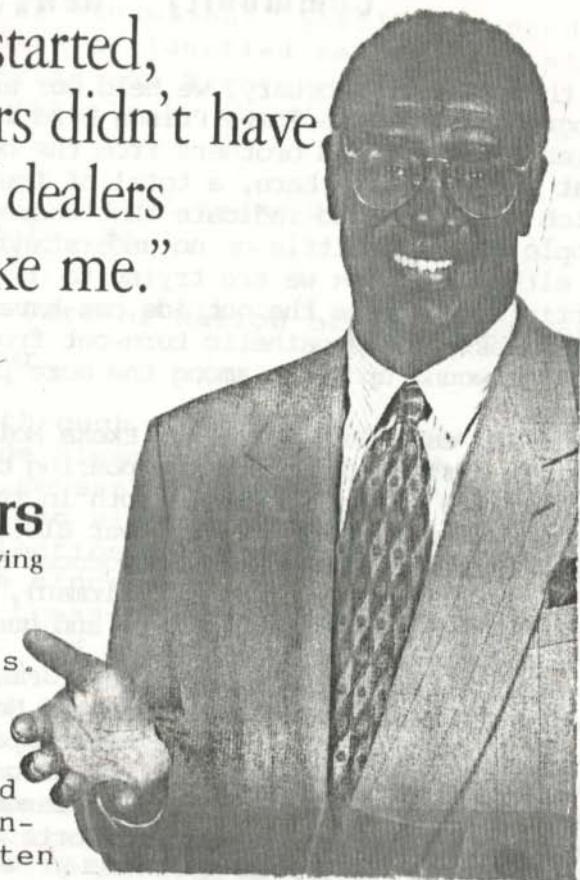
"Back when I started,
General Motors didn't have
a whole lot of dealers
who looked like me."

Jim Bradley

Jim Bradley, GM Dealer
Ann Arbor, Michigan

General Motors

We Never Forget Who's Driving



positive role models. And throughout the U.S., African individuals and groups have established and are establishing mentoring programs, often in connection with rites-of-passage programs. Through these mentoring and rites-of-passage efforts, African adults hope to provide youth with positive role models and instill in them constructive value systems. It isn't uncommon for these programs to have names and symbols that connect them with Africa and/or African-based ideas.

But here we go again. More contradictory messages. It isn't uncommon for these programs to employ mentors/role models who, while they may genuinely care about African youth, are seen as positive mainly because they have achieved various levels of success and prestige according to Caucasian social standards. Because an African male or female has

(Cont. on page 15)

Announcements

If you would like to help JASA House, please call (713) 662-9981 or write JASA House, 34828 Loop Central Drive, Suite 100, Houston, Texas, 77081.

For information on the SOS(Supporters of SubSaharan Africa) Campaign, contact Hope Sullivan Hurley at (602) 443-1800.

An anthology of prisoners' writings, to be entitled "Political Vibrations: The Voices of Afrikan Captives, One of the Best Kept Secrets in Amerikka," is being initiated, organized, and arranged by Indiana prisoners: Akono Jahi, Maurice Bishop, Shaka Shakur, and Darryl X. Alexander. "Hopefully this anthology, once completed, will serve as a strong catalyst for bringing to the collective consciousness of Afrikan people the truth of what great potential is lingering behind these massive walls of repression/oppression." To submit work and/or get more information on this project, write to: United Brothers and Sisters Communications Systems 912 West Pembroke Ave. Hampton, VA. 23669.

.....
Commentary(Conclusion)

a "good" job or profession, hasn't been in trouble with the "authorities," is "dressed for success," etc. doesn't mean that that person is a positive model. He or she may be a straight-up sell-out.

By several measures, it can be appropriately said that we, as a body, are in critical condition. And much of the "medicine" that is being prescribed for us would seem to be good "medicine." But whether we're talking about pooling our economic resource, establishing and maintaining mentoring programs, or otherwise dealing with our collective health, we are diluting the medicine when we contradict our words with our deeds and when "our" "leaders" and "spokespersons," as well as "our" media and other institutions, serve a master that is **not us**. -Editor

Back In Time

But, whatever the fate of an African was to be after he had become a part of plantation society, in the initial stages of enslavement all shared a common experience. At home in Africa, Kofi not only had a name that was of symbolic significance to him, but also had an unambiguous group identity, and was respected as an individual. To make a slave of Kofi he had first to be transformed from a tribesman into a "worthless nigger," a "heathen black." The slave factories and the baracoons on the coast of Africa and the indignities of the Middle Passage were calculated to begin the process. Then the "black" had to be reduced almost to the level of an animal--eyed and poked and felt and bid for in the New World slave marts. The aim was not really to "dehumanize" him, however, but only to "degrade" him, to change him from one kind of human being into another, from an autonomous individual rooted in a culture a tractable, pliant, human being always responsive to the command of a master or a mistress. The processes of capture and sale were what anthropologists call "rights of separation," the first stages in an initiation process. There were acts designed to "kill" the old man, a death preparatory to rebirth.

The "seasoning" process was the first step in a "rite of transition," in the making of a new man out of Kofi, often a man with a new scoffing name like Caesar, Prince or Pompey, a name without the rich and sometimes mystical meaning of the African name...

Here and there in the New World, ethnic identification remained, but over-arching and over-riding the tribal focus of identity was an imposed identity. White men defined all Africans as "blacks," "les noirs." They might try to divide and rule by favoring one tribe against another on a specific plantation; they might have their stereotypes about which tribes were brave or pusillanimous or produced exciting and seductive women, but in their buying and their selling of men, their suppression of rebellion and their verbalizations when expressing anger, all were simply "blacks." The slaves' counter-image of themselves was that

they were **Africans**. The people of the Diaspora eventually defined Africa as their "home," not some specific local spot from which they came or where their tribe or that of their ancestors lived, but **Africa**. The word, Guinea, in some places, came to symbolize the continent. When a man died his spirit went "home"--to "Guinea" or to **Africa**--the land of black men.

Source: THE REDEMPTION OF AFRICA AND BLACK RELIGION by St. Clair Drake

Africentric Crossword Puzzle #9 -Solution

